

But God Prepared a Worm (Jonah 4:1-11)

God Interrupts Our Comforts

Proposition: We all as servants of God need to be warned by three truths in this text that God oft times strips away our comforts to show us the reality of our true concerns.

God interrupts our comforts by...

I. Corrupting the Comfort of our Covering (Vs. 5-7)

- A. The Origin of the Covering (Vs. 6a-b)
- B. The Operation of the Covering (Vs. 6c-d)
- C. The Outcome of the Covering (Vs. 6e)

His concern was for his own satisfaction.

II. Cutting-Off the Comfort of our Conditions (Vs. 8)

- A. The Favorable Conditions were Cut Off (Vs. 8b)
- B. The Fortifying Conditions were Cut Off (Vs. 8c)
- C. The Fulfilling Conditions were Cut Off (Vs. 8d-e)

His concern was for his own security.

III. Confronting the Comforts of our Coldheartedness (Vs. 5, 9-10)

- A. The Coldheartedness of Withdrawal (Vs. 5a-d)
- B. The Coldheartedness of Waiting (Vs. 5e)
- C. The Coldheartedness of Wrath (Vs. 10-11)

His concern was for his own self.

But God Prepared A Worm (Jonah 4:1-11)

As citizens living in one of the wealthiest nations in the world we do not realize the comforts that we take for granted everyday. Robert Heilbrunn gives us a little mental exercise to go through to help us see these comforts. 1) Take out all the furniture in your home except for one table and a few chairs. Use blankets and pads for beds. Take away all of your clothing except for your oldest suit, shirt or blouse. Leave only one pair of shoes. Empty the pantry and the refrigerator except for a small bag of flour, some sugar, and salt, a few potatoes, some onions, and a dish of dried beans. Dismantle the bathroom, shut off the running water, and remove all the electrical wiring in the house. Take away the house itself and move the family into the coal shed. Place the "house" in a shanty town. Cancel all sub-
We all as servants of God need to be warned by three truths in this text that God oft times strips away our comforts to show us the reality of our true concerns. Notice first of all God interrupts our

I. By Corrupting the Comfort of our Covering (vs 5-7)

Background on Jonah. He was an unwilling participant in this whole thing. Yes he went. Preached & declared, but Jonah's word

fear came to past city repented and spared. in a rage he

A. The Origin of the Covering (Vs. 6a-b) - Now remember he's mad at God. Can you see him sitting under that makeshift booth arms folded, lip pouted out pouting because God didn't rain down wrath. Yet despite his anger at God, God graciously and mercifully provided a blessing, a gourd leaf to cover his head and protect him from the hot desert sun. This blessing

B. The Operation of the Covering (Vs. 6c-d)

Have you ever been around a sunburnt person before. You talk about the notable side of a person coming out. God sent this blessing to this man, who was already mad at God "do deliver him from his grief or his displeasure" God gives this gourd to calm him down, for Jonah to redirect his thinking concerning these 12 minutes

C. The Outcome of the Covering (Vs. 6e)

He went from being irate to idolatrous. He didn't praise God he praised gourd. He became preoccupied with the blessings and not the blessing! That is idolatry! W. Wink - Anything that we trust other than the Lord becomes our God and therefore an idol. No wonder God prepared a worm to kill it in Vs. 4. This nation

II. By Cutting Out the Comfort of Our Condition

(Vs. 8) Once the covering that God had blessed Jonah with was taken off then he was exposed to the elements. Then God

1) ...Cancel all subscriptions to newspapers, magazines, and book clubs. This is no great loss because now none of you can read anyway. Leave only one radio for the whole shantytown. Move the nearest hospital or clinic ten miles away and put a midwife in charge instead of a doctor. Throw away your bankbooks, stock certificates, pension plans, and insurance policies. Leave the family a cash hoard of ten dollars. Give the head of the family a few acres to cultivate on which he can raise a few hundred dollars of cash crops, of which one third will go to the landlord and one tenth to the money lenders. Lop off twenty-five or more years in life expectancy. This little exercise may give us some insight into what God is doing in the life of His prophet Jonah where the comforts of his life were stripped away to reveal the true concerns of his heart. We all as servants of God need to be warned by three truths in this scene in the life of Jonah that God oft times strips away our comforts to show us the reality of our true concerns.

2) ...in a rage he stomped out of town and prayed one of those prayers that hopefully he regretted in hind sight. He was mad. And seemed to be waiting for God to change his mind and destroy the city! That's when this whole gourd thing comes up. Spurgeon called it "Jonah's object lesson." I want you to notice something about this gourd covering...

3) This blessing came straight from the hand of God.

4) ...our nation to a great extent worships the blessings of prosperity and plenty and utterly rejected the great God Jehovah that is behind those blessings.

1) ...across the desert that can raise the temperature as much a 20 degrees and last from three to seven days. Oh how quickly God can take the favorable winds of life and turn them in to an uncertain hurricane to reveal our true concerns and reasons for following God. Debilitating

2) Hebrews 12:5-6...My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Revelation 3:19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

3) ...I heard one preacher entitle his message on this same passage "A Census of Senses" He said Jonah is suffering from "stinking thinking." He's got a bad attitude when it came to God's doings. That same spirit can consume a person, a home, and a church and believe you me, God will put a worm right slam in the middle of the situation to all our rotten attitudes to light.

4) ...centered around a gourd and when that gourd is taken away, then his life came crashing down like a stack of cards! Ray Comfort tells the story of when his children were small, how that because he loved them and wanted to show kindness to them, he bought them a TV. But he quickly noticed that where before when he would come home his children would greet him at the door, they now stayed glued to the TV. He took the TV away and told them "I bought you the TV because I love you but if it keeps you away from me, I'll take it away." God can do the same with you and I.

so the speak turned up the heat!

A. Favorable Conditions were Cut off (Vs. 8b)

Up until this point, Jonah had enjoyed relative comfortable conditions. But starting with the little warm things began to change. God turned the soft breezes of the arid desert into a violent "vehement wind" Vehement = burning cutting dry scorching wind. Arabians called it sirocco. It is a hot oppressive wind filled w/ dust blowing across desert.

B. Fortifying Conditions were Cut off (Vs. 8c)

That head that once was covered and protected by the gracious promise of God is now exposed to the draining and debilitating heat of the Sun. The protection was removed! Would

God remove his divine hand of protection from our lives? Yes, When your God is a god and not the Lord, He will, Heb 12:5-6, Gen 3:19. I heard one

C. Fulfilling Conditions were Cut off (Vs 8d-e)

Jonah has said this death wish twice in this chapter. First in verse 2. I believe that was merely out of frustration. "I'd rather die than my reputation be smeared in front of all these heathen." But in these conditions: dehydration, burning eyes, parched & cracked lips, scorched skin; He just despaired of life. Jonah life had become centred.

III. By Confronting the Comforts of our Cold-heartedness (Vs 5, 9-10)

I've met a lot of hard headed people in my line (None of which are in this room. Well maybe one or three, no more

7 than 5) but Jonah takes the cake. God is revealing

A. The Coldheartedness of Withdrawal (Vs 5a-d)

Verse 1 starts out that he was displeased. Didn't like what God had done, and told God about it in vs 2. And in vs 5, Jonah put his back to Nineveh and withdrew to the desert in hopes God would change his mind and destroy the city with Jonah on front row to watch it all. What a picture of a self-centered cold heart. God's heart was for that city and Jonah turned

B. The Coldheartedness of Waiting (Vs. 5e) Jonah

made himself a nice comfy place to watch what he hoped would be the absolute destruction of heavily populated city. And there he waited and waited and waited. Why are we waiting. He we crawled up on our little hill at 68 Vanduer Road, got settled in under our comfy little gourd leaf to watch as God custom to

C. The Coldheartedness of Wrath (Vs. 10-11)

We can tell by verse nine that God still hasn't gotten thru to Jonah. He's still upset about the gourd. He wanted God to spare the gourd and pour out his wrath upon the city. Jonah look at yourself. The author wrote what was revealed here in these final verses. His priorities were perverted. His perspective was

IV. Closing - I'm sure that we could all

cry buckets of tears singing "Thank you Lord for your blessing on Me." But are we so enamored w/ blessings that we worship the giver instead of Give,

- 1) ...Jonah turned his back on it and became enamored with a gourd leaf. In many respects we have all turned our back on the lost in our community. We have become indifferent to the hearts and lives of our Ninevah.
- 2) ...casts into hell those around us one by one. I bare a lot of responsibility in our waiting. But no more. This has revealed my cold and indifferent heart.
- 3) ...His perspective was perverted. His goals were garbled. His values were vandalized. His affections were abstracted and awry. His reasoning was rotten and ruined. His compassion was crooked and crumbling. His sympathies were spoiled, shriveling, and shattered. Here it all came to the surface. Jonah would rather God spare his gourd of selfish protection and pleasure and destroy a city of over 120, 000 people. What does that say about our old cold hearts.